

# THE FOURTH ESTATE

Novelized by  
**FREDERICK R. TOOMBS**  
From the Great Play  
of the Same Name by  
Joseph Medill Patterson  
and Harriet Ford.

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Patterson and Harriet Ford.

(Continued.)

He sent the office boy to bring the two reporters, Howard and Jeff. Speaking to Miss Stowe, the "central" of the Advance's private telephone system, he said: "Do not put anybody else on this wire until you hear from me, no matter how long it takes. Understand? Connect this phone with editorial room 4 and have it connected until I tell you. Now be sure about this. Understand? Again be repeated, as it concerned the success of his entire scheme. "Don't break the connection until I tell you myself."

The two reporters came in. "Now, boys, understand what I want you to do. You've got to take, word for word, a conversation I'm going to have here. Go in room 4. You, Jeff, take the receiver."

"Yes, sir."

"And you, Howard, take the extension. This you will each hear what is said. Keep it glued to your post and take down every word you hear tonight between Judge Bartelmy and me. The judge will sit in the chair at the right of my desk. I will be in my own chair. The telephone will thus be midway between us. Whatever words he and I say will be said almost directly over the mouthpiece of the phone. Now, you see what I am going to do?"

Brand took a lead pencil from his pocket and began a proceeding which the two reporters, accustomed as they were in their business to ingenious strategy, failed at first to understand. Then the scheme dawned on them. Brand took the telephone receiver from the hook, and the metal arm immediately snapped upward, establishing the connection. He inserted the point of the lead pencil in the small aperture under the little metal arm of hook and deliberately broke it off. The tiny wedge thus held up the hook. Brand now hung up the receiver, and the pencil point prevented the weight of the receiver from bearing the hook down and breaking the connection. The connection was made continuous without the slightest indication that such was the case. Every word now spoken within a reasonable distance of the telephone and the extension telephone in editorial room 4, where Howard and Jeff were to be stationed. They had stenographers' pads with them, on which they were each to take down the conversation in shorthand.

"This phone will be open all the time that Bartelmy is here," announced Brand. "Go in there, Howard, and see if you can hear Jeff and me talking. Sit over here, Jeff." He pointed to the chair at his right. Howard went out.

"Now, Jeff, take down this and take down what you say to me," continued the editor.

Brand turned to Jeff and began to talk in a natural tone of voice.

"Jeff, you know I think the dog in the moon was seven times too slow in his journey through the paths of men, having lost 6,749,739,274,480 pounds in his auto northward. Is that your opinion?"

"No, not entirely. Hence and hereafter we complain of such a miraculous egotism of generality and solemnity of peaceful garments and cold thought."

Brand struck a blow on the desk.

"On the contrary, it was unquestionable and with nasty justice, miscalled."

"One can never be too careful about matters of this kind."

"Name-pammy-got it?" cried the editor, bending over the mouthpiece.

"Come in, Howard!"

"Compare your notes, boys," instructed the managing editor.

They held the records side by side and quickly glanced over them.

"They are almost exactly the same," they exclaimed in unison.

A smile of satisfaction spread over Brand's face.

"All right. Now chase back to room 4, both of you."

The office boy brought Brand a card. He took it, and as he glanced at it his eyes narrowed down into little sparks of light.

"A half a minute later Judge Bartelmy stood in the doorway. He nodded briefly to Brand, and his eyes swept around the entire room before he stepped in. Slowly he proceeded in front of Brand's desk.

"Good evening, judge," said the editor.

"Good evening, Mr. Brand."

"Let me take your things. I'll hang them up," offered Brand. Just as Dupuy had been, Bartelmy was in evening dress. He took off his white kid gloves and put them in his pocket and then handed his hat and coat to the editor. Brand opened the door of the room and hung the judge's things therein. He closed the door. Bartelmy stepped to the closet, opened the door and peered sharply into its four corners, even fumbling behind his long coat, to make sure that no witness was lurking there to spy on him.

"Oh, that's the way you feel!" commented Brand. "I'll show you over the place. But you shouldn't worry."

Bartelmy coughed nervously.

"One can never be too careful about matters of this kind, Brand. I should think that you would have learned that much by this time."

"This is my first experience of this kind," said Brand.

"Of course it is," answered Bartelmy, with a tinge of sarcasm in his voice. "It always is the first time. But you are assuredly very lucky indeed, Brand, to do so very well at your first try at it."

"Come, look over the place, and let's get through with it," put in the editor.

He crossed and locked the door through which the judge had entered. Then he led his visitor over to the room opening into a hallway which extended to various rooms. He pointed to the room directly across the hall. "It's quite dark, you see," he said. "This is where a couple of editorial writers sit. They go home nights, lucky dogs, not being newspaper men."

Brand was quick enough to catch the ironical comment of the busy managing editor on the scholarly men who wrote the opinions of the paper. Brand drew the judge back into his office and locked the door behind him.

"Now we are alone, absolutely alone," commented Brand significantly. He led the way to his desk and pointed out to the judge the chair at the right hand side. Brand dropped into his own chair. "Have a seat, judge," he said.

Judge Bartelmy drew the chair in, divested himself of the newspaper which he carried under his arm, and seated himself in it. He leaned forward toward Brand and rested his elbow on the desk. His face was within ten or twelve inches of the telephone.

CHAPTER XI.

BARTELMY, now that he had taken the final and extremely disastrous plunge and had come to the office of the Advance, waited for Brand to make the opening remarks about the particular object of his visit.

Brand was waiting for the judge to do the same. It was the newspaper man who spoke first, after the two had seated themselves. He was anxious to get the matter over with as quickly as possible, for he well knew that, in spite of all his precautions, affairs in a newspaper office are so uncertain that an interruption of an unexpected nature might occur to ruin the entire plan.

"Mr. Dupuy was here a short time ago," he ventured.

Judge Bartelmy proceeded to explain the appearance of the lawyer lobbyist in the affair. While it was plain to Brand that the judge had sent Dupuy as a go-between so that it would be impossible to connect Bartelmy with the payment of any money as a bribe, the jurist did not propose to acknowledge that such had been his laudable purpose. He gave an entirely different reason.

"Yes, I know," he said. "He found me at the opera with my daughter. I hoped, Mr. Brand, that by allowing me to act through him you would spare me this last humiliation."

"Would it not be safer for you if no third party knew of your transaction with me?" suggested Brand.

The judge plied the colossal ignorance of this amateur in trickery. Did not he know that in the superior spheres of crooked practices it became necessary to employ third persons on many occasions to put through matters of this sort? And he was a newspaper man of years of experience too. No, this starry young man would never finish supplying the judge with surprises of that Bartelmy was positive. Perhaps it might be in order to observe at this point that, while Brand of course could not know that these thoughts were passing through his visitor's mind, he at the same time would have been ready to confess that he was going to provide several more surprises for the jurist. But there are different varieties of surprises.

"Dupuy is in my confidence," the judge pronounced with an air of finality.

"He's not in mine," responded the managing editor.

"You're mistaken in him. I know him intimately."

"Oh, the pity of it!" exclaimed Brand. "Oh, that you should be intimately acquainted with such a man as Dupuy!"

Bartelmy could not restrain a sarcastic smile at the editor's sneer at Dupuy.

"Mr. Brand," he said quickly, "your moral reflections at this juncture impart a certain quaint humor to the situation."

"I am afraid that is the trouble with me. My humor is nearly always unintentional." Brand sighed as though sorry for himself.

The judge began to show signs of nervousness.

"Well, shall we get on with it?" the jurist asked him.

"Yes, I must rejoin my daughter here waiting for me at the opera. She has very anxious that I should not come here tonight. It was curious—her persistency in the matter."

Brand drew his chair closer to the judge, and the two spoke in low tones.

"Let's get to business," he said.

The judge went on talking about his daughter.

"She displays an unusual, I should say an extraordinary, curiosity as to my mission here," he said. "My daughter would have made a great cross ex-

"We're wasting time, judge." Now it was Brand who was becoming impatient.

"Am I to understand that the payment of this sum?" Bartelmy began.

Brand raised his voice to a high pitch.

"Ten thousand dollars?" he said.

"Yes," agreed Bartelmy cautiously.

"Am I to understand that it is—abuses out of your recollection not only the incident of which you were speaking, but also as to?" He paused.

Brand helped the would be briber to complete his sentence.

"You mean your secret interview last night with Dupuy and the attorney for the Lansing?"

The visitor raised his hand warningly at Brand's loud tones, as though to counsel caution.

"Yes, yes."

"Lansing Iron corporation?" continued Brand, bending close to the telephone.

"Yes. Will this sum, paid in hand, induce you to forget—ah—not only that incident, but also various other matters to which the Advance seems to have taken exception in the past?"

Brand sank back in his chair.

"You mean you want us to let up on you all around?"

"Precisely."

"Then that's understood."

"You will make a memorandum for me in writing to that effect—a receipt, so to speak?"

He pushed a pad toward the managing editor.

"All right—certainly," agreed Brand, taking up a pen.

The judge began to congratulate himself on the ease with which he was handling the young man.

"This is as—ah—more businesslike," he said.

But Brand gave him another shock when he said:

"Yes; I'll draw it up in duplicate. Each of us will keep a copy—signed."

To be Continued.)

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